



*Euxinograd tablet - a mysterious  
Bulgarian*

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## Etymology of the ethnonym “Bulgarian”

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Bulgarian and foreign linguists propose different hypotheses for the linguistic origin of the ethnic self-designation of the Bulgarians, *preserved in an unchanged form from the 6<sup>th</sup> century to the present day, as seen from the inscription “Bolgar” on the ceramic tile from Vinichko kale (Vinitsa fortress) in Northern Macedonia.* The proposed etymologies are *not convincing*, some are *absurd* from a semantic point of view, because: 1. They proceed from *the completely wrong, anti-scientific theory that the language of the Ancient Bulgarians (Proto-Bulgarians) was Turkic.* 2. They don't pay attention to *the testimony of the Roman-Gothic historian Jordanes, who in the middle of 6<sup>th</sup> century “translated” into Latin two self-designations of the Huns, settled as federates of the Eastern Roman Empire in the provinces of “Coastal Dacia” (today northwestern Bulgaria) and “Scythia Minor” (today Dobrudja) in the 60<sup>s</sup> – 70<sup>s</sup> of the 5<sup>th</sup> century – this Latin “translation” suggests the exact etymology of the Bulgarian ethnonym, if we accept the theory that the European Huns, of which the Ancient Bulgarians are a part {mentioned by the Greco-Roman authors Pliny the Elder (before 79 a.D.) – thuni, Dionysius Periegetes (early 2<sup>nd</sup> century) – θυνοί ~ θοῦν(ν)οί ~ ὄν(ν)οί, Claudius Ptolemy (mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century) – χοῦνοί, Hippolytus of Rome (early 3<sup>rd</sup> century) – οὐεννοί (scribal error οὐεννοί instead of \*οὐνοί), from 5<sup>th</sup> century onwards Late Antiquity authors regularly wrote Gr. οὔν(ν)οί = Lat. hun(n)i<sup>1</sup> – see my scientific publication “Евponeйckume хунu” (“The European Huns”) at [www.academia.edu](http://www.academia.edu)}, are an IRANIAN community of tribes around the Caspian Sea.*

Here's what Jordanes wrote: *“Also Hernac (Latin voiceless laryngeal h substitutes the Greek inspiratory graphic symbol [ʰ] – my note, Ch.G.), a younger son of Attila, with his people chose for settlement the remotest part of Scythia Minor (i.e. Dobrudja at the Danube delta, where, after more than two centuries, kaná Aspavruk settled {before the 8<sup>th</sup> century – [espəβrúk ~ əspəvrúq], later [β/v] was dropped (elision) and got [esperúq ~ əspəxúx]} – note and italics mine, Ch.G.). His kinsmen Emnetzur (Emnetzur) and Ultzindzur (Ultzindur – a transcriber's error instead of \*Ultzindzur – Gr. τζ and Lat. tz in the Late Antiquity are read as both ts [ts] and dz [dz] replacing ch [tʃ] and j [dʒ] in foreign words and names – my note, Ch.G.), conquered Utus, Iscus and Almus in Coastal Dacia. Then many of the Huns, having invaded various places, surrendered themselves in Romania (surrendered to the power of the Roman Empire – my note, Ch.G.). From the latter descended those who even now are called Sacromontisifi and Fossatisii.”* It's evident from the context that *the Huns who surrendered to the Roman Empire*

<sup>1</sup> München-Helfen, Otto: *The World of the Huns*, University of California press, 1973, pp.444-448;

Atwood, Christopher: *Huns and Xiōngnú: new thoughts on an old problem* – in: *Studies in history and culture in honor of Donald Ostrowski*, Brian Boeck, Russell Martin, Daniel Rowland eds. Bloomington, Slavica Publishers 2012, pp.27-52

were probably either *part of, or related to, those who were settled in Coastal Dacia* – the province encompassed present-day *northwestern Bulgaria and part of northern Serbia* (*Almus* is present-day *Lom*). Jordanes did *not* correctly understand his source – it is logical to read “*his relatives from Emnetzur and Ultzindzur*” because these are *not personal names but tribal names*: Proto-Indo-European (PIE.) *\*(s)kewr-ó-s* → Proto-Indo-Iranian/Aryan (PII.) *\*ǵawrás* → Proto-Iranian (PIr.) *\*ǵawráh* → Proto-Bulgarian/Ancient-Bulgarian/Irano-Bulgarian (IrBg.) *\*ǵowráh* → *\*ǵu:ré* → *\*ǵú:rə* → *ǵu:r ~ dzu:r* ‘*clan, tribe*’ → Lat. *-tzur ~ -dzur*, with *allo-morphic* variant PIE. *\*(s)kowr-ó-s* → PII. *\*kawrás* → PIr. *\*kawráh* → IrBg. *\*kowráh* → *\*ku:ré* → *\*kú:rə* → *ku:r ~ gu:r* ‘*clan, tribe*’ → Lat. *-cur ~ -gur*, an *etymological cognate* to PIE. *\*pro:-skewr-ó-s* → Proto-Slavic *\*praskjǫrǫ* ‘*forefather, ancestor*’ → Old-Russian *пращоврь* [praʃʲʊrǫ] ‘*forefather, ancestor*’, Russian/Ukrainian *пращур* [praʃʲʊr] ‘*forefather, distant ancestor*’. Jordanes further wrote: “*As soon as the king* (exactly *rex* is written: Lat. *rex* means ‘*king*’ in Antiquity, ‘*king, prince*’ in the Middle Ages, *not* ‘*chief*’ – my note, Ch.G.) *of the Huns, Dintzic, the son of Attila, knew it, he gathered together those who seem still to have remained under his rule, although they were few in number – Ultzindzures* (*Ultzinzures* – a transcriber’s error instead of *\*Ultzindzures* – my note, Ch.G.), *Angisciros, Bittugures, Bardores...*”<sup>2</sup>. Immediately after reporting the *settlement of Coastal Dacia by the Emnetzur and Ultzindzur*, the historian continues: “*then many of the Huns*” – it’s logical to mean by “*Huns*” *those tribes he has just mentioned*, and immediately he continues that “*from the last* (i.e. *those just mentioned* – my note, Ch.G.) *descended those who are still called Sacromontisii and Fossatisii*”. On the one hand, *Hernac* is *related by blood* (Lat. “*consanguinei eius*”) *to Emnetzur and Ultzindzur*, hence he was *an ancestor of the Sacromontisii* – on the other hand, “*List-name of the Bulgarian kaná-s*” (not “*khan*”, but *ka:ná:* ‘*king*’) states that *this same* *Ἡρνηκς* [irnik] (because Gr. *Ἡρνώχ*, Lat. *Hernac* and Old Bulg. *Ἡρνηκς* are records of IrBg. *Hərnáq* with a diminutive variant *Hərníq*) was a *Bulgarian ruler* who personified a whole epoch, who “*lived*” 150 years (464 – 614 a.D.). Therefore, is it possible that there is *something in common between Sakromontisii, Fosatisii and Bulgarians?*! This precious information of Jordanes suggested to me an *exact Iranian* etymology of the Bulgarian ethnic self-designation: PIE. *\*b<sup>h</sup>leh<sub>2</sub>-* ‘*to call, appeal, invoke, pray*’<sup>3</sup> + suffix *\*-es-* → *\*b<sup>h</sup>láh<sub>2</sub>-es-* ‘*a call, invocation, appeal, supplication to deity → ritual to deity, sacred action*’ + possessive suffix *\*-ó-* → (word-formation *R(z)S(z)-ó-*) *\*b<sup>h</sup>lh<sub>2</sub>-s-ó-* ‘*holy, sacred*’ plus PIE. *\*g<sup>w</sup>orh-/g<sup>w</sup>rh-* ‘*mountain*’ { *\*g<sup>w</sup>orh-á:* → Old-Bulg. *Гора* [gɔrǎ] ‘*mountain*’ } + compositive suffix *-ó-* → *\*b<sup>h</sup>lh<sub>2</sub>so-g<sup>w</sup>orh-ó-s* ‘*holy-mountainous, sacred-mountainous*’ → PII. *\*b<sup>h</sup>əlfja-garás* → {*substantivization with “contrastive shifted*

<sup>2</sup> *Latin sources for Bulgarian history, vol. 1*, Bulgarian Academy of sciences, Sofia 1958, pp.358-359, 361

<sup>3</sup> *Schaffner, Stefan: Der lateinische Priestertitel flāmen*, Graeco-Latina Brunensia 15, 2010/1, pp.87-105

accent'') **\*b<sup>h</sup>əlf-a-gáras** '(one who is) related to a holy mountain, sacred-mountaineer' → Plr. **\*bərfa-gárah** (Plr. **\*rf** → IrBg. **\*l** → **l ~ ł**) IrBg. **\*bələgáreh** → **\*bələgárah** → **\*bələgárah** → **\*bələgárah** → **BOLGÁR** 'sacred-mountaineer' → Lat. literal translation **sacromontisii**: **sacro-** 'sacred' + **mont-** 'mountain' + nom. plural suffix **-isii** (PIE. **\*-etó-** + **-i(j)o-** + **-s** → **-et-ijo-s** → Ancient-Gr. **-έσιος**<sup>4</sup> → borrowing in Latin **-isius**).

The second self-designation mentioned by Jordanes is almost complete **homonymic** form of the first (pronounced the same or almost the same, but doesn't derive from the same root): PIE. **\*b<sup>h</sup>ed<sup>h</sup>(h<sub>2</sub>)-** 'to dig; to stab' → **\*b<sup>h</sup>ód<sup>h</sup>-o-m** (nomen actionis τόμος-type, acc.sing.m./n.) 'a digging → trench, ditch, moat' plus PIE. **\*k<sup>w</sup>er-** 'to make, work' → **\*b<sup>h</sup>od<sup>h</sup>om-k<sup>w</sup>or-ó-s** (determin. compound *ab<sup>h</sup>ayaṃkará*-type) 'one who makes a trench, ditch, moat' → PII. **\*ba:d<sup>h</sup>am-ka:r-á-s** → **\*ba:d<sup>h</sup>aŋ-ka:rás** → Plr. **\*ba:daŋka:ráh** → {Plr. **\*d** before **g/k** → IrBg. **\*ð** (as in Eng. **the**) → **\*l ~ ł**} IrBg. **\*bō:ðoŋga:ráh** → **\*bō:loŋga:rā** → (Middle-Iranian accent shift to the left) **\*bō:lō<sup>h</sup>gá:rē** → **\*bō:logá:rē** → **\*bō:logá:rē** → **BO:LGÁ:R** 'one who makes an excavation structure, ditch/moat-builder' → literal Latin translation **fossatisii**: **fossatum** [fossá:tum] 'ditch, moat'<sup>5</sup> + nom. plural suffix **-isii**.

**Sacromontisii and fossatisii are literal Latin translations of the ethnonym "Bulgarian", made by a (Bulgarian?) informant of Jordanes more than 1470 years ago, which remain unnoticed by the Bulgarian and the foreign linguists!**

Here's a curious testimony about **Hərnáq ~ Hərníq**: in 448 a.D., in the palace of Attila himself, **Priscus the Thracian**, a diplomatic envoy of the Roman Empire, personally knew a very curious prophecy – "{...Zérkon the Maurusian} made everyone laugh, and made them burst into uncontrollable laughter, except Attila (Αττήλα). He remained motionless, did not change the appearance (of his face) and said nothing, nor even laughed. Only when the youngest of his sons entered, named **Irnás** {the last letter is wrong: **Ἡρνάς** instead of **Ἡρνάχ** – my note, Ch.G.}, he (Attila) pinched him on the cheek and looked at him with a merry look. I expressed my astonishment that he neglected his other children and paid attention only to him. And the barbarian who sat beside me and understood the language of the **Ausones** {i.e. of the Ancient Italian peoples: Priscus implied the Latin – my note, Ch.G.}, having warned me to say nothing of what he was about to tell me, said that the (priests) soothsayers had predicted to Attila that his clan would have perished, but would be raised up by this son".<sup>6</sup> The priests were indeed seers-prophets – **Hərnáq** (**Ἡρνάχ** ~ **Hernac** ~ **Ἡρνηκῶ**) was the progenitor of the early medieval Bulgarian statehood!

<sup>4</sup> Vine, Brent: *Aeolic ὀρετον and deverbative \*-etó- in Greek and Indo-European*, Institut für Sprachwissenschaft der Universität Innsbruck, Innsbruck 1998

Lühr, Rosemarie (ed.), Balles, Irene & Matzinger, Joachim: *Nominale Wortbildung des Indogermanischen in Grundzügen, vol. I*, Verlag Dr. Kovač, Hamburg 2008, p.307, § A-98

<sup>5</sup> Дворецкий, Иосиф Х.: *Латинско-русский словарь* (изд. 2-ое, перераб. и доп.), Изд-во "Русский язык", Москва 1976 (Dvoretzky, Joseph Kh.: *Latin-Russian dictionary* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., revised and enlarged), "Russian language" publ., Moscow), p.438

<sup>6</sup> *Greek sources for Bulgarian history, vol. 1*, Bulgarian Academy of sciences, Sofia 1954, pp.116-117